

JANUARY - JUNE 2024

BI-ANNUAL

NEWSLETTER



Together, we can build a healthier and more equitable world, one mother, adolescent, and newborn at a time



BOARD CHAIR STATEMENT



As Board Chair of the Help a Mother and Newborn Initiative (HMNI), I am immensely proud of the strides the organization has made in the first half of 2024. Despite facing significant challenges, the team led by Ms. Lela Precious Dolo has remained resilient, committed, and focused on improving maternal and newborn health outcomes in Margibi County and advancing SRHR across Liberia.

Leading the organization while juggling personal and professional responsibilities has not been easy, but the dedication and passion of our Executive Director, Lela Precious Dolo, and her team have been truly inspiring.

Their efforts have resulted in remarkable achievements, such as the successful launch of the EmpowerHer Journey program and the impactful work of our PEER-PEER Support Clubs.

However, our journey is not without its struggles. We continue to face funding limitations and the ongoing challenge of ensuring the sustainability of our programs. Despite these obstacles, our team has shown incredible perseverance and ingenuity in addressing these issues head-on.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to them, our partners, and all those who have consistently supported our progress. Your commitment and contributions are vital to our mission and greatly valued.

Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of mothers and newborns in Liberia.

Thank you for your dedication and belief in our cause.

DELOU GONSANZEO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STATEMENT



Navigating the dual responsibilities of leading Help a Mother and Newborn Initiative and being a full-time medical student has been a journey filled with many challenges and stress. There were days when the weight of our mission seemed overwhelming, but the vision of creating a better future for mothers and newborns in Liberia kept me going.

One of our most significant achievements this year has been launching the EmpowerHer Journey program. Knowing that this program will give hope and relief to 150 first-time pregnant women made all the sleepless nights worth it. These young mothers, often overlooked and underserved, now has a support system that would guide them through two of the most critical phases of their lives – pregnancy and motherhood.

Similarly, our PEER-PEER Support Clubs have been a beacon of hope for over 100 young adolescents from across Margibi County. Watching these young people gain knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, empowering them to make informed decisions about their futures, has been incredibly rewarding.

The road has not been quite easy. Securing sufficient funding remains a persistent challenge. Many times, we faced the harsh reality of limited resources, forcing us to make tough decisions. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of our programs has also been a constant concern, requiring creativity and resilience to keep our initiatives alive.

Despite these hurdles, the continuous support from my dedicated team of volunteers, our partners, and all those who believe in our mission has been our pillar of strength. Their commitment and hard work have helped us reach this far and for that I extend my heartfelt appreciation.

May God bless you for your dedication and support.

LELA PRECIOUS DOLO

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INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Help a Mother and Newborn Initiative (HMNI) is committed to improving maternal and newborn health outcomes in Margibi County, Liberia. Our mission is to provide comprehensive support, education, and resources to women, adolescents, and newborns, ensuring they receive the quality healthcare they deserve. Since our inception, we have strived to create a society where every mother and child can thrive, free from the preventable risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

In this bi-annual report, covering January to June 2024, we are excited to share the progress and achievements of our key programs. These include the EmpowerHer Journey Program, which supports first-time pregnant women, PEER-PEER Support Clubs that empower adolescents with knowledge on sexual and reproductive health, the Community Health Volunteers Empowerment Program, and the Healthy Complementary Food Program. These initiatives have made significant strides in addressing health challenges, promoting awareness, and fostering sustainable community development.

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Our efforts have been supported by generous contributions from partners, donors, and volunteers, which have been crucial in driving our mission forward. This report provides an in-depth look at our program highlights, success stories, new partnerships, financial overview, and future plans. We also address the challenges we face and outline how our supporters can continue to help us in our mission. We invite you to learn more about our journey and our vision for a healthier, more equitable future for all mothers and newborns in Liberia.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

EMPOWERHER JOURNEY PROGRAM

Launched at the beginning of this year, the EmpowerHer Journey program supports **150 first-time pregnant women aged 13-25** from the catchment communities of 10 local health facilities in Margibi County. Key achievements include:

- Recruitment of 15 young mothers from each facility.
- Completion of a baseline survey and development of a teaching guideline.
- Organized five monthly meetings and awareness sessions on prenatal care, nutrition, and maternal well-being.
- Provision of essential birth kits items to all 150 young mothers, ensuring safe and hygienic deliveries (With support from Lonestar Cell MTN Mobile Money).

This program is addressing critical issues, such as improving knowledge and practices in maternal health, particularly among teenagers with limited access to care and resources.

PEER-PEER SUPPORT CLUBS PROGRAMS

Our PEER-PEER Support Clubs program is empowering over 100 adolescents and youths from six secondary schools across Margibi County by providing knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. With funds from the **Global Change Makers Community Projects Grants**, we are strengthening these clubs in six schools and poised to expand our reach to four additional schools.

COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

This program, started in 2021, has expanded from 50 traditional midwives to 100 community health volunteers, including 70 traditional midwives and 30 community health assistants.

Achievements include:

- Recruitment of 50 new beneficiaries.
- Completion of a baseline survey.
- Implementation of a comprehensive workshop to enhance the skills of the 100 community health volunteers.

HEALTHY COMPLEMENTARY FOOD PROGRAM

In collaboration with LEO Nutrition, this program ensures that babies aged six months and above have access to affordable and nutritious foods.



Key highlights include:

- Functional in four health facilities.
- Provision of organic and nutritious food at a low cost (500LD) to mothers in rural communities.
- Positive Feedbacks from Facilities staff and Mothers of the babies eating the food



OTHER ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND WORKSHOPS

NEW YEAR CELEBRATION IN WORHN TOWN

A special New Year Celebration event in Worhn Town, Margibi County, brought together over 150 beneficiaries and community members for a day of festive activities. This event, made possible by funds from the MTN MoMo Hero of Change Cash Prize and in kind support from other individuals, fostered a sense of unity and community.

STAFF CAPACITY STRENGTHENING WORKSHOP

Two three days workshops (March 28-30 & July 3-5, 2024) were held to strengthen staff capacity, focusing on understanding the organization's mission, vision, programs, and existing policies, as well as enhancing public speaking and AI utilization skills.

PUBLIC HEALTH LAW ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN IN MARGIBI

In March 2024, with funds from CHI, we along with Younepto implemented an advocacy campaign in Margibi and Bong Counties to raise awareness about the draft Revised Public Health Law, focusing on the abortion component. The campaign included workshops, radio talk shows, and town hall meetings.

EMPOWERHER JOURNEY FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Launched on May 2nd, 2024, this campaign aims to solicit financial, technical, and in-kind support to run the EmpowerHer Journey Program for the next two years. So far, over **\$1,500US** has been raised.

SRHR COACH MASTERCLASS PROGRAM

This program provided advanced training for 34 young changemakers on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including distributing menstrual kits to over 100 girls in Dolo's Town for World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2024 and supporting community projects. Health For All and Her Wellness and Rights Network, two outstanding groups from the Masterclass, each received a \$500 check to implement their projects.

TEAM BONDING OUTING

Every year, we organize atleast two general team bonding outings to strengthen relationships among our staff and volunteers and foster teamwork. **On July 13, 2024**, we held our team bonding event for the first half of the year, which included a mix of fun activities, team-building exercises, and opportunities for staff to unwind and connect on a personal level.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

LONESTAR CELL MTN MOBILE MONEY

Their financial contribution enabled us to provide essential birth kits to 150 young mothers during mother's month (may 2024) as part of our EmpowerHer Journey Program.

INFINIX

Through their partnership, we provided amazing gift items to our staff and director of the month and beneficiaries during our community engagement events.

RFSU, CHI, AND MEDICA LIBERIA

Their financial and technical support contributed greatly in implementing the SRHR Masterclass I.

MERTU DIAGNOSIS

Through their partnership, our staff and the community health volunteers on our program learned basic first aid and infant injury Management to enable them respond to emergencies.

THE GATHERING

A partnership formed to enhance the reach and impact of our EmpowerHer Journey Campaign.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Total Revenue Generated

\$ 14,605.80 US

(2023 Balance, Donations, grants, partnerships, Commitments, and others)

Total Expenditure (January -July 13)

Administrative Costs (Team Workshops, Team Bonding, Office Operation, and other engagements)	\$1,556.74 US
Program Implementation Costs (EmpowerHer Journey, Peer-Peer Clubs, and Community Health Volunteers programs)	\$3,670.94 US
New Year Celebration Festival in Worhn Town	\$1,211.25 US
Public Health Law Advocacy Campaign in Margibi and Bong Counties	\$3,975.00 US
EmpowerHer Journey Fundraising Campaign Launch	\$1,510.00 US
SRHR Coach Masterclass Program Cost	\$1,695.00 US
Grand Total	\$13,618.93 US

Net Income \$986.87 US

CHALLENGES



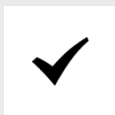
Funding Limitations: Despite our efforts, we face challenges in securing sufficient funding to sustain and expand our programs.



Access to Remote Areas: Difficulties in reaching remote villages we work with (Worhn, Yarnwullie, Peter's Town and Velley ta) due to damage road and lack of means of transportation.



Sustainability of Programs: Ensuring the long-term sustainability of our initiatives remains a challenge due to limited resources and occasional reluctance from some local facilities to coordinate efforts from their end.



Data Collection and Monitoring: Collecting accurate data and monitoring program progress in remote and underserved areas can be difficult.



Community Engagement: Gaining trust and active participation from the community is essential but often challenging.

FUTURE PLANS



1

CONTINUED SUPPORT

We look forward to securing ongoing financial and logistical support for our impactful programs and operations.

2

MAINTAINING PROGRAM QUALITY

We will continue to ensure high standards in our program's delivery.

3

STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

We will continue to prioritize strengthening the capacity of our staff and volunteers.

3

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

We will work on enhancing our capacity to apply for and manage grants independently.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are extremely grateful to our donors for their support and commitment to our mission. Their generous contributions have been instrumental in helping us implement our programs and reach more communities with essential maternal, newborn, and adolescent health services. It is through their support that we can continue to make significant strides towards our vision of a healthier, more equitable future for all mothers and newborns in Liberia.

CORE DONORS OF OUR INITIATIVE (Jan-June 2024)

- **Bowier Trust Foundation Switzerland (BTFS):** Their substantial support has enabled us to sustain our initiatives and ensure that we have a functional office to work.
- **Global Changemakers:** Their Community Action Project grant have been pivotal in strengthening the activities and impact of our existing 6 PEER-PEER Support Clubs.
- **Community Health Care Initiative:** Their partnership has been vital in our advocacy efforts on the National Public health Law and implementing our SRHR Coach Masterclass cohort 1.
- **Board Chair - Delou Gonsan Zeo:** Delou's personal and financial contributions have been a cornerstone of our growth and sustainability.
- **Agape Women Ministry:** Their generous donation generous donations have significantly supported our EmpowerHer Journey Program, providing vital resources for young mothers.

OTHER GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS AND SUPPORTERS

- RFSU
- Medica Liberia
- Glay Eyiinahn Glay
- Charles Lawrence
- Lakshmi Moore
- Julian Reider
- Jaycee Johnson
- Abraham Tulay
- Festus T. Bohlen
- Jennifer T. Toejeah
- Mercy C. Flomo
- Humphretta Reid
- Sayo M. Kamara

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We need your intentional support to run Cohort 1 of our EmpowerHer Journey program. By committing to donate \$5 or more a month, you can make a significant difference in the lives of 150 young mothers and their newborns from poor and marginalized communities in Margibi County. Our target is to secure at least 100 monthly donors, and currently, we have less than 30 persons who committed.

Your contribution will help us provide essential resources and support to these young mothers, empowering them to build better futures for themselves and their children.

Additionally, we are seeking partnerships and collaborations with organizations that share our vision of advancing reproductive, maternal, newborn, and adolescent health in Liberia. Your support and collaboration can help us create sustainable, impactful change in communities across Liberia.

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